

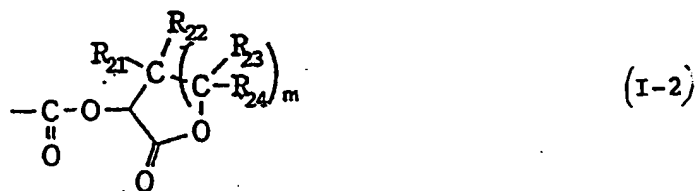
**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-5. (canceled).

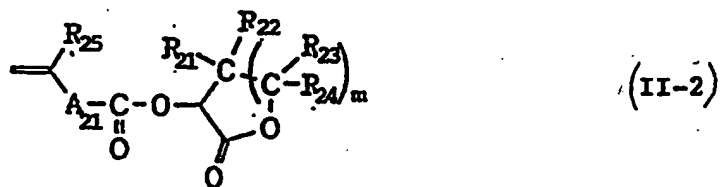
6. (currently amended): A positive photoresist composition comprising a resin which has an ester group represented by the following general formula (I-2) in its molecule and is decomposed by action of an acid to increase solubility of the resin in an alkali solution, and a compound generating an acid by irradiation of an active light ray or radiation:



wherein R<sub>21</sub> to R<sub>24</sub>, which may be the same or different, each represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group; and m represents 1 or 2;

wherein said resin further contains (1) repeating structure units each having an alicyclic hydrocarbon moiety and further contains (2) repeating structure units each having a group which is decomposed by action of an acid to increase solubility of the resin in an alkali developing solution.

7. (previously presented): The positive photoresist composition according to claim 6, wherein said resin is a resin which contains repeating structure units corresponding to a monomer represented by the following general formula (II-2) and is decomposed by action of an acid to increase solubility of the resin in an alkali solution:



wherein  $R_{21}$  to  $R_{24}$  and  $m$  have the same meanings as given in claim 6;  $R_{25}$  represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and  $A_{21}$  represents one group selected from the group consisting of a single bond, an alkylene group, a substituted alkylene group, an ether group, a thioether group, a carbonyl group, an ester group, an amido group, a sulfonamide group, a urethane group and a urea group, or a combination of two or more of them.

Claims 8.-20. (canceled).